

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method suitable for projecting demand, the method comprising:
 - (i) identifying a first set of merchandise;
 - (ii) specifying a second set of merchandise which is to be used as a referent for soliciting information relative to demand behavior for a pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise;
 - (iii) clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand profile for said pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise;
 - (iv) clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand model correlated to model-based demand attributes of said first set of merchandise; and
 - (v) combining the demand profile and the demand model into a single encompassing model which is capable of projecting demand of the first set of merchandise,wherein at least one of said clustering for generating a demand profile, said clustering for generating a demand model, and said combining the generated demand profile and generated demand model are executed on a computer central processing unit (CPU).
2. (Original Claim) A method according to claim 1, wherein said first and second sets of merchandise are disparate.
3. (Original Claim) A method according to claim 1, wherein said first and second sets of merchandise overlap.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

selecting the pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise from the group consisting of item, size, and location.

5. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

selecting a pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise from the group consisting of item, size, color, and location.

6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand profile comprises clustering the second set of merchandise by utilizing an algorithm which partitions this set into non-overlapping clusters with similar size profiles.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand model comprises generating a demand model based on modeling demand as a function of major variables selected from a group consisting of price, promotions, inventory level, and seasonal effects.

8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said combining the demand profile and the model comprises combining the demand profile and the demand model into a single encompassing model by apportioning the model-based demand forecasts, to the appropriate size distribution, using a size demand profile.

9. (Currently amended) A computer implementable method comprising:

- (i) identifying a first set of merchandise;
- (ii) specifying a second set of merchandise which is to be used as a referent for soliciting information relative to demand behavior for a pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise;
- (iii) clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand profile for said pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise;
- (iv) clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand model correlated to model-based demand attributes of said first set of merchandise;
- (v) combining the generated demand profile and the generated demand model into a single encompassing model which is capable of projecting demand of the first set of merchandise,

wherein at least one of said clustering for generating a demand profile, said clustering for generating a demand model, and said combining the generated demand profile and generated demand model are executed on a computer central processing unit (CPU).

10. (Currently amended) A computer system suitable for projecting demand, the computer system comprising:

- (i) a database comprising an identified first set of merchandise;
- (ii) a database comprising an identified second set of merchandise which is to be used as a referent for soliciting information relative to demand behavior for a pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise;
- (iii) a CPU receiving inputs from the database and comprising means for:

- (a) clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand profile for said pre-determined attribute of said first set of merchandise;
- (b) clustering the second set of merchandise for generating a demand model correlated to model-based demand attributes of said first set of merchandise;
- and
- (c) combining the demand profile and the demand model into a single encompassing model which is capable of projecting demand of the first set of merchandise; and
- (iv) an output display for showing the demand forecasts by the pre-determined attribute.

11. (Previously presented) A computerized method for projecting demand for a first set of merchandise, the method comprising:

- receiving data for a first set of merchandise;
- receiving data for a second set of merchandise, said second set to be used as a referent for soliciting information relative to demand behavior for said first set of merchandise; and
- using a computer for clustering the data for the second set of merchandise to generate a model capable of projecting demand of the first set of merchandise.